

June 19 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

president of the mayors group. It's been an experience, and we appreciate all of your efforts this past year. And you've outlined a number of things that we need to continue to work with in the future, and we plan to do that with you, too.

So again, thank you very much. We thank you or all of your efforts and for your staff members and Cabinet officers that are here, too. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Clinton. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Thank you all, and I'll turn it over to Secretary Cuomo and the rest of our crowd. Have a great meeting.

NOTE: The President spoke by satellite at 5:20 p.m. from Room 459 of the Old Executive Office Building to the meeting in Reno, NV. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Paul Helmke of Fort Wayne, IN, president, Mayor Deedee Corradini of Salt Lake City, UT, president-elect, and J. Thomas Cochran, executive director, U.S. Conference of Mayors; Mayor Wellington E. Webb of Denver, CO; Mayor Jerry E. Abramson of Louisville, KY; and David Osborne, president, Public Strategies Group, Inc.

Statement on Internal Revenue Service Reform Legislation

June 19, 1998

I am very pleased that our efforts to reform the IRS took a major step forward today with a bipartisan agreement reconciling the House and Senate legislation. I have worked very hard to give the American people an IRS that is fairer and more responsive to their needs. Enactment of this compromise reform will build on our initiative to give Americans a modern, customer-friendly IRS.

Our new IRS Commissioner, Charles Rossotti, has brought forceful leadership and the best management techniques from the private sector to the agency. This bipartisan compromise will give him the tools he needs to succeed, while expanding taxpayer rights. It will allow the IRS to bring in talent and expertise from the private sector, strengthen the Taxpayer Advocate's office, and expand the convenient and popular practice of filing tax returns electronically and over the phone. We are pleased that Congress incorporated the Commissioner's sweeping reor-

ganization of the IRS along customer service lines and addressed our concerns about earlier versions of this reform by correcting provisions that would have inadvertently allowed non-compliant taxpayers to avoid paying their fair share of taxes. The Congress also made sure that the Treasury Secretary and the IRS Commissioner will serve on the board overseeing the IRS.

Under the leadership of the Vice President and Secretary Rubin, we have made great strides in our efforts to revamp customer service at the IRS. We have expanded phone and office hours, created popular new problem-solving days, and launched independent citizen advocacy panels. We cannot solve every problem at the IRS at once, but we are committed to correcting problems when they arise, and this bill will help us do that. I urge Congress to send me this compromise legislation quickly, but to make sure that it is fully and properly funded.

Statement on Signing the Religious Liberty and Charitable Donation Protection Act

June 19, 1998

I was very pleased to sign today S. 1244, the Religious Liberty and Charitable Donation Protection Act. This bill protects the religious

and charitable contributions made by people who later declare bankruptcy.